

# Work-integrated learning in Vietnam: Perspectives of intern work supervisors

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This paper addresses work-integrated learning program issues from the perspective of work supervisors of interns from a foreign university in an offshore market environment -Vietnam. Universities expanding their markets overseas must research all relevant aspects of the local environment when making operational expansion decisions, and continue research activities on an ongoing basis to ensure that program elements meet evolving local stakeholder requirements. At this stage in Vietnam, collaboration and communication between higher education and industry is rare. Therefore, this paper investigated work supervisors' perceptions of the university's WIL program, and their views on their own role in the intern's learning process. Their feedback about how internship processes can be improved can help guide the foreign university in Vietnam (FUV) to continue to deliver effective work integrated learning in Vietnam, as well as offer insights useful for other universities running WIL courses in overseas locations. (*Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education, Special Issue, 2015, 16(3), 185-198*)

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## INTRODUCTION

In Australia work-integrated learning (WIL) is being mandated in an increasing number of university programs. Controversy over the ultimate improved skills students derive from WIL balanced with the costs, risks and resources involved to establish committed partnerships and administer effective student learning puts WIL programs under pressure on the domestic front (Patrick, Peach, Pocknee, Webb, Fletcher, & Pretto, 2008), let alone on less familiar overseas environments. Although Naylor, Bhati, and Kidd (2010) addressed the development and sustainability of WIL initiatives in a multi-campus university (including an offshore campus in Singapore), there is little published research into the implementation of WIL offshore that considers issues from a local WIL stakeholder perspective. Cooper, Orrell, and Bowden (2010) reviewed the importance of stakeholders in higher education WIL enterprises, and articulated the essential consideration of stakeholder rights and needs when envisioning and delivering WIL.

Therefore, this paper examines a foreign university in Vietnam's (hereafter referred to as the FUV) WIL offering from the viewpoint of local, Vietnamese work supervisors of the FUV interns, who are mostly Vietnamese fee-paying students. At the FUV's Centre of Commerce and Management, a WIL elective that incorporates a 12-week full time work internship placement along with an orientation and five skill/reflective workshops, where interns come together every two weeks to share their intern experiences and review their development, has been in place since 2010. The paper builds on quantitative feedback obtained from the FUV work supervisors, measured by performance evaluations of the FUV interns (Bilsland, Nagy, & Smith, 2014). Overall interns rated highly, however, the authors concluded there was a need to explore the work supervisors' perceptions in greater depth, as the context of internships in Vietnam is very different from that of countries whose institutions have a

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longer history of structured internships and other WIL partnerships. These contextual differences are set out in the literature review.

The role of the work supervisor in intern learning is reviewed from a WIL stakeholder perspective. The paper discusses the Vietnamese work supervisors' perceptions of their roles as intern learning facilitators, given the historical disconnect between higher education and industry/employers. Part of the research aims were to discover the work supervisors' previous experiences with internships, gain insight into what they thought internships should provide the intern, and explore their perceptions on the impact they believe they should have, or would like to have, in terms of intern support and learning. Therefore, our first research question was:

RQ1 –How do work supervisors perceive interns and their learning activities during the internship?

We also sought feedback on various aspects of the work supervisors' experience with the FUV's WIL program, especially given the differences between the structure and communication of the FUV's program and local universities. Currently academic supervisors from the FUV visit the interns' workplaces at least once a semester, the supervisors sign off on one initial goal-setting proposal in the first three weeks of the internship, and complete an evaluation of the intern at the end of the internship. This is more commitment than is required of the local universities' internships. Interns from local universities usually complete an assignment report that is not connected to the actual workplace. Unlike the academics from the FUV, local Vietnamese university academics do not visit or communicate with work supervisors of their interns. It was important to get insight into how the supervisors perceived these differences, and to get suggestions for future improvements to the WIL program. Therefore, the last two research questions were:

RQ2 – What are supervisors' perceptions of work-integrated learning internships in general; how does the intern experience with the FUV compare to local universities?

RQ3 – How can the FUV further support work supervisors?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

WIL researchers contend that the context of the work-integrated learning situation has not been given adequate consideration in terms of: the learning environment affordances (Billett 2009); potential for graduate skill transfer (Jackson 2013); multiple stakeholders' perceptions of placement quality (Rowe & Winchester-Seeto, 2014) and in particular concerning the impact of the direct work supervisor (Crebert, Bates, Bell, Patrick, & Cragnolini 2014; Vaughan 2014) and the quality of work supervision (Henschke & Poppins 2009). Smith and Smith (2010) state the need to understand industry stakeholders as crucial co-contributors to a work-as-learning culture. Internship placements can be considered as learning endeavors that have outcomes of high importance for the three key stakeholders – first and foremost the student, but also the university and the sponsoring employer.

Therefore, given that the work placement context represents a sphere of learning that lies outside the relatively controllable, curriculum-oriented environment of the university course regime, the FUV must ensure its awareness of social and cultural influences that impact on the way WIL is delivered in the Vietnamese internship placement context.

Guile and Griffiths' (2001) typology of learning at work identifies student interns, academic supervisors, and work supervisors as joint participants transforming academic knowledge to

practical application and ongoing capability development. Therefore, WIL effectiveness hinges on genuine partnerships between industry and the higher education institution (Bates, 2005; Choy & Delahaye, 2011). Parsons, Caylor, and Simmons (2005) state that both academic and workplace supervisors should understand that they need to work together if interns are to learn from the experience. However, communicative, collaborative links between higher education and internship organizations are weak and undeveloped in Vietnam (British Council, 2012; Tran, 2010, 2012, 2104; Valley & Wilkinson, 2008; World Bank, 2008).

#### *Context of WIL in Vietnam*

The stakeholder shared-benefits approach of Moody (1997) was cited by Cooper, Orrell, and Bowden (2010) in their discussion of “a new paradigm of work-integrated learning” (p. 25). This paradigm is characterized by partnerships between education and industry, and includes students as participants. Cooper, Orrell, and Bowden (2010) stress the need for stakeholders to cooperate within this paradigm to ensure that mutual goals are shared, mutual benefits realized, and that students can *“work in order to learn and at the same time learn to work”* (p. 25). Patrick et al. (2008) illustrated the intersection of these WIL stakeholder relationships (Figure 1a) that frames the critical importance of collaborative relationships between universities and employers in order to deliver mutual benefits to all stakeholders. As illustrated, work supervisors are positioned at the critical, intersected point (shown as the shaded area in Figure 1a). As front-line employer stakeholder participants, they directly interact with the student interns at the workplace, as well as with the University stakeholders – academic advisers.

However, up until now, this diagram applied to Vietnam would resemble Figure 1b, indicating a lack of dialogue between the university and the work supervisor.

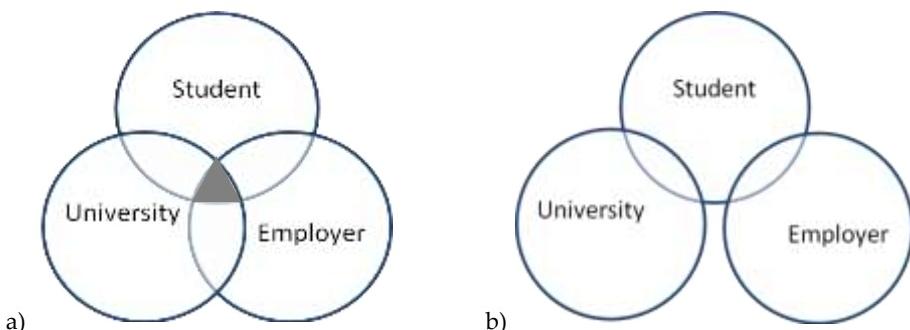


FIGURE 1: a) showing the traditional intersect between WIL stakeholder environments, and b) showing the disconnect between university and employer stakeholders in Vietnam WIL environment.

In Vietnam, the collaboration between universities and employers that, as illustrated by Figure 1a appear essential to effective WIL internships, is not evident. As seen in Figure 1b, there is no intersection of all three stakeholders – the student interacts with the work supervisor independently and separately from the academic adviser, typically by submitting a report assignment. This fundamental disconnection between higher education institutions and industry in Vietnam (Ashwill, 2010) undermines the capacity of internship placements to deliver desired workplace learning practice and capability development to interns. Tran (2012) surveyed interns from local Vietnamese universities who claimed they were not given

any real work to do, and gained neither understanding nor confidence. The lack of university involvement in the work placement establishment or process leads to unsystematic, unstructured internships. The learning experience of the intern is fortuitous rather than targeted and planned.

#### *Feedback from Industry*

Trede (2012) refers to work supervisors as “workplace educators”. Parsons, Caylor, and Simmons (2005) maintain that work supervisors should not only provide an authentic work environment, but they should create a nurturing environment for the student interns. Rowe, Mackaway, and Winchester-Seeto’s model (2012) identifies four aspects to the work supervisor’s role: support, education, administration and guardianship. Bates (2005) explicitly extends the “guardian” aspect to one of “gatekeeper” - assessing students’ maturity, values and ability to join the profession. The scope and complexity of these work supervisors roles make it highly desirable that not only should universities and industry work supervisors work together to create optimal placement environments for intern learning (Bates, 2005; Billett, 2009; Rowe, Mackaway, & Winchester-Seeto 2012), but that universities should actively engage in providing work supervisors with support required to fulfill these learning ambitions. Smith, Mackay, Challis, and Holt (2006) found that academic staff should not assume that work supervisors perceive their role as industry mentors. Smith and Smith (2010) observed that previous experience with internships is a powerful indicator of the degree to which work supervisors can successfully deal with the multiple demands on their time as well as the challenges to provide effective guidance to interns.

Clearly, industry perspectives can add much to WIL program and assessment development (Choy & Delahaye, 2011), as well as to curriculum relevance and innovation (Bates 2005; Ferns, Smith, & Russell, 2014; Henschke & Poppins, 2009). In addition their suggestions can help universities improve their work-integrated learning support structures. For example, a PhillipsKPA(2014) study into industry perceptions about WIL in Australia found that many employers were unclear about what WIL is, and sought formal and explicit guidelines from universities.

## METHODOLOGY

The general framework of the research was exploratory. As WIL practices are relatively undeveloped in Vietnam, existing studies on undergraduate internships in Vietnamese higher education is limited. Therefore, a qualitative approach intended to uncover fundamental insights into perceptions of a key stakeholder in intern learning, the work supervisor, was appropriate due to the lack of extant published information relevant to the context of work-integrated learning in Vietnam. However, adhering to a strictly exploratory, inductive approach was neither useful nor possible, given our experience as academic advisers at the FUV and our exposure as researchers into effective work-integrated learning research and practice in general. As Patton (2002) maintains research activities cannot be totally divorced from the researchers’ experience; as our observations as intern advisers in Vietnam drove this research project to life, they inevitably influenced its initial direction and research questions. Although we aimed to put aside our own biases and focus on unearthing perceptions and issues of importance to our respondents, especially those we might not be aware of, the research framework incorporated elements of a grounded theory approach that shaped formulation of research questions (Glaser & Strauss 1997, cited in Lewins & Silver 2007). As Lewins and Silver (2007) explain, researchers can work with a grounded, iterative

approach that simultaneously delivers the desired elements of exploratory discovery that we aimed for.

#### *Method*

Ethics-approved interviews of approximately thirty minutes were arranged with twenty-one work supervisors of FUV business undergraduate interns. Fourteen interviews were conducted in Ho Chi Minh City, where the main campus of the FUV is located; seven were done in Hanoi, where the FUV has established a newer and smaller location. Subjects who had supervised interns for at least two semesters were approached to ensure validity - responses needed to be based on familiarity and experience with the program. As we were part of a larger team of FUV academic intern advisers who communicate and meet with work supervisors, we interviewed qualifying intern work supervisors whose contacts were obtained from other members of the team in addition to those with whom we had already established relationships with in order to maintain objectivity. A semi-structured interview guide was developed and employed for the research. Semi-structured guides allow interviewers to anchor the interview to the interviewers' research purpose, while simultaneously allowing for respondents to offer their own insights and points of view, and are effective in delivering reliable, comparative data in situations where more than one interviewer collects field data (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). See Appendix A – Interview Question Guide for a copy of the interview guide.

Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and cross-checked to ensure accuracy. Interview transcripts were analyzed with Nvivo 10 qualitative software. Initially selective coding that focused on capacity building and collaboration was done to gain a fundamental perspective on these key issues. This initial coding process was subsequently refined to generate further insight into work supervisors' perceptions around our three research questions.

#### RESEARCH FINDINGS

To continue from the initial results, further coding themes were developed and organized into sets representing each of the research question dimensions:

- RQ1 –Perceptions of interns and internships
- RQ2 – Overall experience with the FUV's WIL program and comparison with local university internships
- RQ3 – Suggestions for further support from the FUV

Results reflecting emphasis on the major themes that developed within the research dimension sets are summarized in Table 1.

Work supervisors perceived interns were there to learn; most of them elaborated on how they invest time in building relationships with interns. Sixteen respondents outlined formal relationship building activities with the most frequently mentioned being formal introductions (7), team meetings and social events (7), and scheduled meetings (5). Eighteen respondents also incorporated informal relationship building activities such as informal chats (9) coffee or lunch, or just asking the intern how things were going. Three respondents commented that interns and staff were close in age, making it easier to build communicative relationships. Many responses indicated that interns were generally treated as part of the staff during their internship. Twelve respondents stated that interns from the FUV were there to work and learn. This quote illustrates how one work supervisor perceives the interns' desire to learn, and links it with including the intern as part of the team: "We do not want

that students come to (Company) just observe information, how (Company) is going, how (Company) operate their business, we also want the student to participate in the work, to join the team" (Respondent 10).

TABLE 1. Research dimensions and corresponding theme details

| Research question dimension                   | Coding theme                                 | Coding theme specifics                | Sources (n=21) | Coded responses |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Perceptions of interns and internship role    | Building relationships                       | General                               | 15             | 49              |
|   |  | Formal                                | 16             | 24              |
|   |  | Informal                              | 18             | 38              |
|   | Perception of intern characteristics         | Positive                              | 13             | 36              |
|   |  | Negative                              | 8              | 18              |
|   | Learning how to work                         | Positive                              | 12             | 39              |
|   |  | Positive                              | 20             | 43              |
|   | Different from local university              | Positive                              | 18             | 35              |
|   | Perceived value of WIL                       | Positive                              | 15             | 21              |
| Overall experience with the FUV's WIL program | Benefits to employer                         | Positive                              | 10             | 27              |
|   | Suggestions for further support from the FUV | Information sharing and collaboration | 13             | 25              |
|   |  |                                       | 17             | 45              |
|   | Goal setting for interns                     |                                       |                |                 |

Thirteen responses made positive comments about intern characteristics, referring to English skills, drive to learn, work hard, and proactive attitudes. Eight respondents made negative comments; FUV students were perceived as overconfident, lacking in office technology skill (Excel was mentioned 3 times), and having less drive than less-privileged students from local universities. However, negative comments were often balanced with positive comments; for example:

Before I have a chance to work with FUV students, I think they are over-confident and they want a high salary after they graduate ...but after they come here and having a chance to work with them and know you (Academic adviser) I know they have good knowledge and have a chance to study at a good university. (Respondent 12)

Work supervisors' experiences with the FUV's internship program were uniformly positive. With the caveat that work visits are well planned and the visit's purpose made clear, 20 out of 21 work supervisors indicated that rather than being an imposition, academic visits showed professionalism, commitment and care toward students and their learning. Other comments indicated the value of information exchange and updates on intern progress and capability, appreciation for establishing direct communication, program clarification, and

heightened awareness of the other elements of the intern's WIL program such as the workshops and reflective assessments.

The FUV's WIL program was clearly perceived as different from local universities' internships in a positive way. While many of the work visit comments overlapped into this theme, other comments related to the lack of communications and clear links between the academic and internship work context that characterize local university internships. A lack of clear structure of internships from local universities resulting from this disconnection was also mentioned, for example: "Sometimes internship they don't really go to the company, they just do some kind of study or report. Not really good the program from the local university and cannot get experience, help to find a job" (Respondent 05)

Respondents indicated appreciation of the program's provision of generic skill workshops and discussions aimed at assisting students adapt to the workplace: this was seen as helpful to the sponsoring workplace as well as to the interns by making transition time smoother. As one respondent said:

I think there are two values. The first thing is your support for your students to prepare for their new work experience. Sometimes students have a lot of knowledge but when they come to work, they do not know how to work with other people, how to communicate, how to work in a team work . . . . The second, you are supportive for the business like us. (Respondent 16)

Ten respondents articulated direct benefits of the internship to their organizations. The 27 coded responses cited the value of interns' support of team projects and other tasks; in at least two cases these were directly related to client service provision. Interns' desire to learn and complete work to a high standard was highly appreciated. Other benefits related to the input of fresh and youthful ideas and feedback; opportunities to recruit promising interns to the business; and opportunities for the work supervisors to improve their own coaching and mentoring skills.

Work supervisors were positive about the support received from the FUV, demonstrated by suggestions for further support that centered on two specific themes:

- 1) More extensive information sharing about interns' study background prior to the placement start, post-internship evaluations (either in face-to-face meetings or electronically by email) as well as guidelines and information on the FUV's WIL program provided to the employing organization;
- 2) Goal setting to be done by the intern and shared with work supervisors/academic advisers close to the placement start date, accompanied by intern self-assessments.

## DISCUSSION

### *Perceptions of Internships*

As our interviews with work supervisors confirmed, internships in Vietnam – at least in business undergraduate degrees – are often left to the student to initiate with the employer directly (Ashwill, 2010; Tran, 2012). The culture of family networks and influence often results in students securing internship placement positions from family members and contacts, but can mean that the student's learning process is unstructured and divorced from the higher education context. Therefore, it was somewhat surprising but certainly encouraging to find that the work supervisors were overall strongly supportive of intern

learning and development, and willing to take a collaborative role in that process. It may appear that our sample could have been biased. Work supervisors who had supervised interns for less than two semesters were not interviewed, so observations of new work supervisors and work supervisors who may have withdrawn participation due to negative experiences were not obtained.

However, as a foreign university in an offshore environment we sought to identify the concerns of organizations most likely to provide optimal support for a successful WIL program. Our research focused on organizations that represented desirable work environments for our intern placements in order to further the success of these internship partnerships. This may have contributed to the high level of supervisor support across research question dimensions.

Several work supervisors had been interns in local universities themselves; these supervisors had been less than impressed with that learning experience, similar to local graduates interviewed by Tran (2012), and favorably compared the communication and structure provided for the FUV interns with their own intern experience. Other respondents contrasted the FUV intern program with that of their other local university interns' programs, again favorably. Consequently, perceptions that interns were "learning how to work" emerged as a theme across respondents. Work supervisors perceived that the internship's purpose was to not simply to give students tasks to gain familiarity and practice, nor even to train them to do more complex project tasks but moreover to explore and develop a deeper awareness of "how to work". Their propensity to actively build relationships with interns in a range of ways and situations to support their development underlined this awareness.

Where the interns themselves were concerned, again generally work supervisors perceived them as hard-working, responsible, proactive and possessing desirable youthful energy. However, something for foreign universities to note was that several respondents reported initial perceptions of FUV students as difficult, overconfident, and less driven than local university interns. Although some respondents said their perceptions had changed after actually working with the FUV interns, initially FUV students may have been stereotyped as "rich" students who did not have the grade levels required to enter the better local universities and could pay their way into a foreign university course. English skills of the FUV interns were seen to be superior to local university interns. That was not surprising; however, two work supervisors said that interns from stronger local universities such as the Foreign Trade University were gaining ground. This indicates that foreign universities cannot afford to take their apparent advantage to supply intern candidates with English speaking skills for granted.

#### *Overall Experience with the WIL Program*

Respondents reported the overall experience as positive. As mentioned previously, the communicative and collaborative elements of WIL – academic visits to the workplace, communication with work supervisors, and involvement with interns' goal setting and evaluation assessments – are rare in Vietnam so the findings were encouraging.

Most of the positive comments reflected the perceived professionalism of the FUV's WIL program, and "care" for students. It was interesting to see the concept of "care" incorporated repeatedly into interview transcripts. A text search for the term "care" (at stemmed word level) in the nodes "work visit" and "difference from local university internships" produced

12 sources and 21 references. One reference stated that the FUV work visit not only showed care for the students, but for the work supervisors as well. The support given to students to match them with suitable placements was a point of difference between the FUV and local universities; respondents also perceived this support as evidence the FUV cared about its students. An implication for foreign universities is that by reaching out to work supervisors and visibly supporting students from the start of the placement and throughout the internship, the university's image of seriousness and care may be established within industry circles. This provides a promising foundation to establish and solidify stakeholder trust and collaboration that may be particularly valuable in foreign higher education markets such as Vietnam, where building relationships based on connections is a key element of successful initiatives.

Results indicated willingness to invest time into greater collaboration with the FUV on making the program more effective, and doing what they could even though it is not part of their job description. This feedback was encouraging. Given the deeply rooted separation between higher education and industry in Vietnam, where industry/academic partnerships are just beginning to be established, it is remarkable that work supervisors express this level of interest in further participation and collaboration. One possible explanation is that in Vietnam, with its youthful demographic – the median age in Vietnam is 28.5 years, compared to 36.9 years in Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010) - work supervisors tend to be younger than the average Western work supervisors. They may have studied overseas, and may be more familiar with or open to greater collaboration. Or as young managers, they may be motivated to develop these coaching and training skills which are becoming increasingly valued as career skills in Vietnam.

#### *Suggestions to Improve Support*

As the workplace environment and quality of workplace supervision is clearly critical to effective WIL the extent to which work supervisors requested further formal provision of information about students, their programs and their goals for the internship was remarkable and encouraging, especially given the usual Vietnamese internship context of non-involvement. The findings support research found in our literature review - that explicit guidance and support mechanisms for work supervisors are valuable ingredients in effective WIL activities (Parsons, Caylor, & Simmons, 2005; Smith, Mackay, Challis, & Holt, 2006). To meet the challenges that work supervisors new to internship practice can encounter (Smith & Smith, 2009), communicating and gathering feedback to find out guidelines and support the work supervisors require early in the establishment of a WIL program, and ongoing to support new work supervisors coming on board in the organization, is recommended.

Tools developed in the universities' home country to inform and guide work-integrated learning industry partners should be provided to the offshore campus work supervisors, such as those provided in the Innovative Research Universities' Guidelines for WIL publication (2012). However, universities will need to adapt guidelines in order to make them clear, relevant, and culturally appropriate to the local business environment and useful to the local work supervisors.

Work supervisors wanted more information about the interns' goals and the courses they studied – although in an interview this has probably been discussed, often this is with HR or someone other than the frontline work supervisor. Especially in large organizations, intern allocation may be done by the Human Resources Department in consultation with a senior

department manager, leaving the work supervisor out of the information loop (one work supervisor from a large organization mentioned this). Our results show that most work supervisors are concerned with their ability to deliver the best learning experience for the intern; therefore, work supervisors should be included in interviews if possible, or provided with the interns' CV and degree program information.

The other major finding was the work supervisors' interest in the interns' goal setting assessment. The suggestions to have students share their internship goals at the start of the placement so that work supervisors could provide more effective support shows a genuine orientation towards assisting students to take responsibility and ownership of their internship learning throughout the whole placement (Coll et al., 2008).

Following up on these suggestions to provide more intern-related information and goal-setting to the work supervisors may also help support work supervisors navigate the time constraints that both the literature review and our research findings identified as a concern and possible barrier to providing the best learning support to interns. As PhillipsKPA (2014) reported, barriers to providing effective workplace supervision can be overcome by helping organizations develop more effective processes over time.

#### *Limitations*

All the work supervisors interviewed except one worked in private, joint partnerships, or multinational organizations rather than state-owned organizations. State owned organizations in Vietnam have many different organizational characteristics – age of managers, control, and adherence to hierarchy (Quang & Vuong, 2002). In addition, this paper was confined to business degree WIL internships. Future research and activities that require understanding of internships applied to a wider spectrum of employer stakeholders in Vietnam would need to consider this limitation.

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In Vietnam work-integrated learning can be a point of difference from local universities. As this paper demonstrates, the essential link between WIL stakeholders at the front lines (student, academic adviser, and work supervisor) does not currently exist. The FUV's establishment of this essential link through its WIL program which incorporates work visits and feedback from work supervisors as well as students into a structured program represents a unique business degree program asset in the local environment. This asset is apparently valued and appreciated by the Vietnamese work supervisors that we interviewed. Therefore, program effectiveness should be monitored and adapted to make it as locally-relevant and valued as possible, boosting the WIL provider's competitive advantage.

Overall, research results indicate that work supervisors' collaboration in the learning process should be valued and explicitly sought by the FUV. Encouraging greater collaboration between the frontline agents of WIL – the academic adviser and the work supervisor, and WIL administrative coordinators – may represent a useful mechanism for foreign universities to gain insight and knowledge into local industry partners' practices and needs. As many academics who teach at the FUV and at other international university foreign locations come from a range of countries and are new to the local business context, they may not have practice and tacit knowledge of local businesses; this may take years, if ever, to acquire. Therefore, close collaboration with local work supervisors represents benefits not only for the WIL program itself; their insights and feedback can inform course development on locally-

relevant content and delivery approaches, and provide potential guest speakers, event participants, and industry project sources for the foreign university.

Communicating to establish and develop work supervisor support to ensure students obtain optimal benefits from their internship (and ultimately from their university degree) is essential for a successful WIL program. Our study shows the importance of demonstrating care to students, as well as to industry partners, when conducting WIL programs; the incorporation of work visits and collaboration on intern academic activities such as goal setting were viewed positively by our respondents. Therefore, consciously developing visible vehicles of communication and collaboration with front-line work supervisors is recommended for foreign universities in offshore environments.

As providing clear and complete internship guidelines, and information on the interns' academic programs was suggested by a majority of respondents, we conclude that internship program guidelines adapted to suit the local socio-cultural and industry environment should be provided to work supervisors as well as to larger organizations' human resource representatives at the very start of the internship program. In addition, intern academic workshop and assessment material should be presented and perhaps discussed in the workplace visit for new work supervisors, workshop material provided to work supervisors, and workshop supervisors invited to participate in workshops to a greater extent.

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## APPENDIX A – INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDE

1. Is coaching and mentoring a common practice in your organization?
  - a. If yes, can you give some examples?
  - b. How comfortable do you feel in your role as a coach or mentor?
2. How do you build up a relationship with a new intern?
3. How do you help the intern achieve goals?
4. How do you help the intern solve problems or overcome obstacles?
5. How do you provide feedback to the intern on his/her progress?
  - a. Immediately/weekly/verbally/ in writing etc...
6. Does your company have their own internship program in place?
  - a. If yes, can you describe it briefly?
7. How do you feel about the workplace visits by FUV academic supervisors?
  - a. How do those visits make a difference to interns from other universities?
8. How would you describe your overall experience with FUV's internship program?
9. What suggestions or recommendations would you like to express to improve our internship program?

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## About the Journal

The Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education publishes peer-reviewed original research, topical issues, and best practice articles from throughout the world dealing with Cooperative Education (Co-op) and Work-Integrated Learning/Education (WIL).

In this Journal, Co-op/WIL is defined as an educational approach that uses relevant work-based projects that form an integrated and assessed part of an academic program of study (e.g., work placements, internships, practicum). These programs should have clear linkages with, or add to, the knowledge and skill base of the academic program. These programs can be described by a variety of names, such as cooperative and work-integrated education, work-based learning, workplace learning, professional training, industry-based learning, engaged industry learning, career and technical education, internships, experiential education, experiential learning, vocational education and training, fieldwork education, and service learning.

The Journal's main aim is to allow specialists working in these areas to disseminate their findings and share their knowledge for the benefit of institutions, co-op/WIL practitioners, and researchers. The Journal desires to encourage quality research and explorative critical discussion that will lead to the advancement of effective practices, development of further understanding of co-op/WIL, and promote further research.

## Submitting Manuscripts

Before submitting a manuscript, please ensure that the 'instructions for authors' has been followed ([www.apjce.org/instructions-for-authors](http://www.apjce.org/instructions-for-authors)). All manuscripts are to be submitted for blind review directly to the Editor-in-Chief ([editor@apjce.org](mailto:editor@apjce.org)) by way of email attachment. All submissions of manuscripts must be in Microsoft Word format, with manuscript word counts between 3,000 and 5,000 words (excluding references).

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Typically, authors receive the reviewers' comments about 1.5 months after the submission of the manuscript. The Journal uses a constructive process for review and preparation of the manuscript, and encourages its reviewers to give supportive and extensive feedback on the requirements for improving the manuscript as well as guidance on how to make the amendments.

If the manuscript is deemed acceptable for publication, and reviewers' comments have been satisfactorily addressed, the manuscript is prepared for publication by the Copy Editor. The Copy Editor may correspond with the authors to check details, if required. Final publication is by discretion of the Editor-in-Chief. Final published form of the manuscript is via the Journal website ([www.apjce.org](http://www.apjce.org)), authors will be notified and sent a PDF copy of the final manuscript. There is no charge for publishing in APJCE and the Journal allows free open access for its readers.

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Types of manuscripts the Journal accepts are primarily of two forms; *research reports* describing research into aspects of Cooperative Education and Work Integrated Learning/Education, and *topical discussion* articles that review relevant literature and give critical explorative discussion around a topical issue.

The Journal does also accept *best practice* papers but only if it present a unique or innovative practice of a Co-op/WIL program that is likely to be of interest to the broader Co-op/WIL community. The Journal also accepts a limited number of *Book Reviews* of relevant and recently published books.

*Research reports* should contain; an introduction that describes relevant literature and sets the context of the inquiry, a description and justification for the methodology employed, a description of the research findings-tabulated as appropriate, a discussion of the importance of the findings including their significance for practitioners, and a conclusion preferably incorporating suggestions for further research.

*Topical discussion* articles should contain a clear statement of the topic or issue under discussion, reference to relevant literature, critical discussion of the importance of the issues, and implications for other researchers and practitioners.



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